

# Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Saturday, March 18, 2006

## Cleanup Success

MOVER threw a big party last Saturday at the Minatchom Atdao Pavilion in Oleai to celebrate the group's successful completion of its cleanup project.

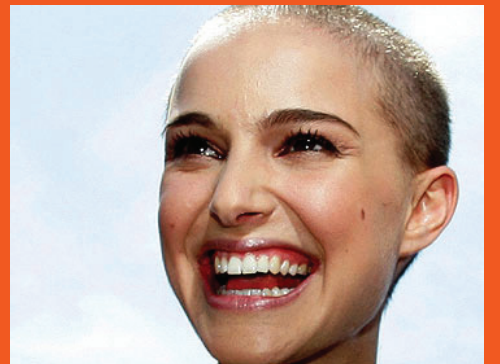
Page 3



## V for Vendetta

The movie has a masked man in a black cape. Red roses. A beautiful lady held captive. Is this 'Phantom of the Opera, Part Two'?

Page 5



# 65 percent want Arroyo out

Pulse Asia poll says 6 percent back coup d'etat

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.  
INQUIRER

Up to 65 percent of Filipinos believe that the resignation or removal of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from office is the best way to solve the country's political crisis although they have not formed a consensus on how her successor should be chosen, according to the latest nationwide survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

In its analysis of the survey, conducted from Feb. 18 to March 4 this year, Pulse Asia said Ms Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency may have influenced the desire of more Filipinos to

'We have numbers, evidence to back new bid to impeach Arroyo

By TERESA CERJOJANO  
AP WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Opposition leaders expressed confidence Thursday they will muster enough witnesses, evidence and support among fellow lawmakers for a new impeachment case against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

WE Page 2

see her step down.

"The proportion who chose the resignation option is larger among those who were interviewed after the declaration of a state of emergency (61 percent) than among those who were interviewed prior to 24 February

2006 (53 percent)," said Pulse Asia. Only about a quarter of the 1,200 interviews were made after Proclamation No. 1017 was issued on Feb. 24.

The survey had a margin of error of 3 percentage points

65 Page 2

In this handout from the Office of the Press Secretary Malacanang Palace, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, right, and visiting New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, take light snacks on the beach at Panglao island resort, Bohol province in central Philippines on Tuesday March 14, 2006.

AP



## ROSAURO ZAPANTA Sleuth and kegler extraordinaire

By AGNES E. DONATO  
REPORTER

Doctors, lawyers, writers, and even a nanny have all inspired hit television shows. Accountants, however, have to do with bit parts and are often portrayed as reserved, boring bean counters.

Rosauro Zapanta, a senior audit manager at the Office of the Public Auditor, thinks of his job as closer to playing Sherlock Holmes than Keith from *The Office*.

After all, Zapanta is currently on top of the much awaited audit of the defunct Marianas Public Lands Authority, an autonomous agency abolished over allegations of massive corruption.

Born and raised in the Philippine province

SLEUTH Page 2



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# PINOYNEWS

## Fun day for OFWs in NMI set tomorrow

The CNMI is all set for tomorrow's big event, the first-ever "Family Fun Day" at the American Memorial Park, and all Filipino nonresident workers in the Commonwealth are invited to participate in this event.

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration welfare officer Mary Dait said everyone could bring their family members and all their friends to a whole day of fun and games.

The event aims to give Filipino workers a chance to meet their fellow

workers on the islands during the event that will be held from 7am to 5pm.

Dait said in an earlier interview that the "Family Fun Day 2006" is in coordination with all leaders of various Filipino organizations in the CNMI.

The day would start with a simple ceremony and presentation of Filipino talents from different organizations and individuals.

There will also be a song and dance competition for children with ages seven to 12. The afternoon will be

for various Filipino organizations to facilitate indoor and outdoor games for kids, adults and families like obstacle course, sack race, family goes to market, paper dance, bring me contest, egg relay, longest line, and many more.

An hourly fundraising raffle will also be a part of this fun day. Dait said proceeds of the event would be donated to the Tuloy-Aral Project of OWWA.

"The project aims to help children of former OFWs by providing them \$100

each for their miscellaneous school expenses like notebooks, pencils, uniforms, etc, she said."

All winners in the various fun games and raffle will receive their prizes during the closing ceremony.

"We invite all OFWs, their families and friends to participate and have fun on March 19, 2006," the organizing committee said.

The OFW Support Group is composed of individual volunteers that share their generosity in providing

assistance to Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and Philippine Overseas Labor Office in planning and implementing common community projects and activities that will provide unity and foster friendship among the Overseas Filipino Workers in the CNMI.

For more details, contact Marie Caamic at 287-7908, Dang Bernabe at 235-8922, James Ignacio at 285-7132 or OWWA Office at 235-6992. **(Marconi Calindas)**

## Filipino pastors pray for righteous govts

Members of Christian churches led by Filipino pastors will hold a prayer event on April 13 to pray for all nations, particularly the Philippines, amid serious political and economic issues besetting the country.

Dubbed as "Prayer for the Nations," the gathering is spearheaded by the Association of Filipino pastors in Saipan.

The group prayer will be held in the evening at Cornerstone Christian Fellowship.

He said people need to pray for peace and order, economic recovery, and righteousness in government.

"Although we are in Saipan, we continue to pray for our country. Christians should really

unite to uphold a nation. It's our duty to pray for the nations so that righteousness will prevail," said pastor Manuelito Rey, association secretary and pastor of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship.

He said "concerns in the Philippines also affect us here and affects our families back home."

At the same time, he said the prayer gathering will also focus on the CNMI, the U.S., and "nations of the world."

"We want to see nations being right with God. God's heart is for the nations, and not just one particular group," he added.

He said the association decided to gather next month since it had not done such a group prayer for several years now.

"There are so many things to pray about — economy, governance, health and education programs, family," said Rey.

The association, formed in 1998, currently consists of eight pastors representing eight churches on Saipan.

They are pastors Raffy Arnia of Jesus is Lord Fellowship, Jimmy Sembrano of Emmanuel Methodist Filipino congregation, Raffy Javier of Saipan Bible Fellowship 2, Paul Medina of Saipan Christian Church, Danny Ibanez of Upper Room International Ministries, Cesar Mangsat of Saipan Bible Fellowship 3, God's Victorious Army, and Rey of Cornerstone Church. **(Liberty Dones)**

65

FROM PAGE 1

either way at the 95 percent confidence level.

The results showed that 59 percent of the respondents believed that Ms Arroyo's resignation was in the best interest of the country. Most of the respondents seeking

WE

FROM PAGE 1

House of Representatives minority leader Francis Escudero and opposition Rep. Gilbert Remulla told foreign correspondents that the case will be filed in July with at least the 79 supporters needed to endorse and send it to the Senate for trial. The House is dominated

the President's ouster were poor (Class D and E).

With 6 percent wanting Ms Arroyo forcibly removed either by a coup or foreign government intervention, the number of those who want the President out of office by any means went up to 65 percent.

Like the October 2005 survey, there was no clear trend

by Arroyo's allies.

Escudero said the 51 lawmakers who supported a failed impeachment bid last year on charges of alleged vote rigging and corruption by Arroyo would be joined by disgruntled members of the majority.

After pre-empting an alleged coup last month, Arroyo declared a weeklong state of national emergency, cracked down on

on how Filipinos wanted Ms Arroyo replaced in case she resigned -- 38 percent thought it best that special elections be held; 21 percent favored Vice President Noli de Castro taking over either for the balance of Ms Arroyo's term or in a caretaker role for a new government under a new Constitution.

protests, filed rebellion charges against alleged coup plotters and raided a critical newspaper.

At the center of the poll fraud controversy are alleged wiretaps of her supposed phone conversations with Virgilio Garcillano, an election commissioner, about ensuring a million-vote victory in the 2004 election. Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing, saying she won the election fairly.

SLEUTH

FROM PAGE 1

of Rizal, Zapanta and seven other Filipino accountants came to work for OPA more than 20 years ago. All of his Filipino colleagues have left, but Zapanta remained. He is currently the only nonresident auditor working at the government agency.

"I like my job. I wouldn't have stayed this long if I didn't. It's very challenging, especially because I am not office-bound. I get to visit different agencies and meet a lot of government officials," he said in an interview at a Garapan bowling center Thursday night.

The fact that he is a foreigner in the Commonwealth has its advantages and disadvantages as far as work is concerned, he said.

Having no family ties in government, he rarely encounters a case where he has to recuse himself because of conflict of interest. But then, it also took him some time to become familiar with people's relations, a major factor in probing issues related to government ethics.

"Everybody here is related and it makes auditing difficult. The good thing is, if you just follow professional standards, you will have no problems. Just show that you're professional and people will respect you," Zapanta said.

Indeed, respect is something he has earned from the community, including his colleagues.

Zapanta has been promoted twice since joining OPA in November 1984. From senior auditor, he was elevated to audit manager in 1994 and then, to senior audit manager a year later.

Also in 1994, he became the first

nonresident employee to be the named Employee of the Year from the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor. Last year, he was voted 2005 Leadership Award-ee by his co-workers at OPA.

Ever modest about his professional achievements, Zapanta considers his feats as a bowler his "claim to fame."

From being a pastime activity, bowling has become a passion that Zapanta shares with his family and the community. He was one of the organizers of the Philippine Bowling Association of Saipan and has twice received the organization's Bowler of the Year Award.

He is also actively involved in the Saipan Bowling Association, whose precursor—the Commonwealth Bowling Association—named him Bowler of the Year in 1996.

He has represented SBA in various international competitions, then as a bowler and now as manager and coach of the Saipan Team. Zapanta has competed in Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines, Guam and Korea.

Zapanta has also managed to make bowling enthusiasts of his wife Elsa and three children. Together with his wife, he runs SBA's youth bowling program every Saturday morning.

The program prompted the 14th House of Representatives to adopt a resolution last year to recognize Zapanta and his wife "for their voluntary contributions for the development of the sport of bowling in the CNMI and for fostering youth interest in the sport."

Zapanta has also received several awards for his contributions to the Saipan Fil-American Lions Club, of which he has been a member since the 1990s.



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MOVER members pose for a photo during the completion party held last Saturday, March 11, 2006 at the Minachum Atdao Pavilion.

## MOVER successfully ends cleanup project

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**  
REPORTER

MOVER, or the Multi-Sectoral Overseas Filipino Workers Movement, threw a big party last Saturday at the Minachum Atdao Pavilion in Oleai to celebrate the group's successful completion of Phase III of its Inshore Cleanup and Restoration project.

MOVER president Jun Lapeceros Jr. said the project involved the restoration and cleanup of the Susupe Lake Road drainages. He said the project lasted nine straight Sundays since Jan. 8 this year.

Lapeceros said the drainages were full of garbage and trash and were completely covered by overhanging branches from the tall trees along the roadside.

"The group started its cleanup operations from 7:30am using their tools and personal and group equipment," he said.

He said they are very happy with the final results of the finished project.

On behalf of the entire group, Lapeceros expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Rotary Club of Saipan through the assistance of Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama, who shouldered the expenses of removing tons of debris that were piled along the road. The Department of Public Works' Solid Waste Management also helped in the removal of the debris, said Lapeceros.

MOVER is also extending its sincere thanks to the people and companies that supported them throughout the project: Ramona

Mengloi, Benny Pangelinan, Pacific Trading Co. president Charles Cepeda, DFS Galleria president Marian Aldan Pierce, Lt. Gov. Tim Villagomez, House Speaker Oscar M. Babauta, Vice Speaker Justo Quitugua and Rep. Jesus Lizama.

Lapeceros said the group is also thankful for the support of DFS Galleria, DPW, Division of Environmental Quality, and the Saipan Mayor's Office.

MOVER, said Lapeceros, would like to extend its biggest thanks to Mobil Oil Marianas for awarding them a \$5,000 grant to finish the project.

Lapeceros said the project would not have been accomplished without the enduring support of MOVER members who sacrificed nine early Sunday mornings for the project.

"Without them the project would not have materialized," he added.

## LABOR FRONT

### Hotline for labor complaints

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
REPORTER

Attorney Dede Hill, legal counsel for the Labor Department, answers today's questions.

**Q: Does Labor have a hotline number for anonymous tipsters against employers who violate labor laws? If there is none, what should the anonymous tipster do to relay his or her complaint?**

**A:** The department does not have a hotline. But it accepts anonymous tips. Labor investigates these tips. Anonymous tipsters should call Labor at 236-0900 and say they want to talk to investigators at the Labor Enforcement Section.

**Q: Does the government or Labor provide a free lawyer to complaining workers?**

**A:** No. A lot of complaining workers represent themselves. The administrative hearing officers are very understanding. Labor investigators are assigned to handle cases. The Labor director will decide if there is a merit to the complaint being investigated by the investigators. Hearing officers can either deny or affirm the director's determination. Labor is not the employees' counsel, but the department's interest with the workers might be the same.

**Q: If a guest worker has a labor complaint, does it mean that he or she cannot be deported as long as he or she does not violate criminal laws?**

**A:** It's a case-by-case situation. If a worker files a labor complaint and his or her permit expires, the worker has a legal right to remain in the Commonwealth as long as there is a pending labor hearing; there is a memorandum to seek work; or the worker has a temporary work authorization. But there would be instances that the worker would be deported such as violation of immigration laws.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com), or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the Century Insurance Building on Beach Road, Garapan.

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# Reward offered for alleged coup plotters

By **OLIVER TEVES**  
AP WRITER

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)**—The Philippine government on Thursday offered bounties for a former senator and six others accused of involvement in a foiled coup plot last month.

The Department of Interior and Local Government, which supervises the national police, offered 5 million pesos (US\$98,000; €81,300) for former Sen. Gregorio “Gringo” Honasan, a former army colo-

nel involved in coup attempts in the 1980s.

Three million pesos (US\$58,800; €48,800) were offered for the “surrender, arrest or capture” of six other people, including four former military officers, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said in a memorandum to police.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a national emergency on Feb. 24 to thwart a coup plot allegedly involving communist rebels, military “adventurists” and opposition poli-

ticians. She lifted it a week later but warned she would reimpose it if the threats persist.

National police spokesman Senior Superintendent Samuel Pagdilao warned the public against “harboring these wanted offenders.”

He said wanted posters with photos of Honasan and the others will be distributed in public places, including markets, barber shops and bus terminals.

Honasan has not been seen in public since last month. He received amnesty following a

peace pact with the government in 1995. He led coup attempts against then-President Corazon Aquino in 1987 and ‘89. He was also allegedly involved in a mutiny by about 300 junior officers and personnel from elite military units in July 2003.

The government claims last month’s coup plot involved the withdrawal of support for Arroyo by some military officers, including Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who has been removed as commander of the army’s elite Scout Ranger Regiment.

Lim, who was also involved in the 1989 coup attempt, is under house arrest.

The former Philippine marine commandant, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, and several other military and police officers also have been relieved of their posts on suspicion they were involved in the foiled coup.

The army inspector general, Maj. Gen. Ferdinand Bocobo, said 23 army officers, including Lim, and 30 enlisted men have been investigated but refused to say how many would be charged

with violating military law.

The government said the plot also involved communist rebels and had the alleged backing of at least six left-wing congressmen, including former labor leader Crispin Beltran, who has been arrested and charged with rebellion.

Rep. Satur Ocampo, president of the largest left-wing party, Bayan Muna, and four other congressmen are holed up at the House of Representatives to avoid being arrested without warrants.

## US bugged Estrada, son JV, Lacson—sources

By **CHRISTINE AVENDANO**  
INQUIRER

The United States, starting from an unprecedented spying scandal in the White House allegedly involving Filipino-American Leandro Aragoncillo, had bugged former President Joseph Estrada and his son, Mayor Joseph Victor (JV) Ejercito of San Juan town in Metro Manila, official sources said.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the case, said Sen. Panfilo Lacson had also been subjected to wiretapping.

The US Embassy sent a diplomatic note dated Feb. 1 to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) transmitting “legal Notices of Interception of wire and/or electronic communications for Joseph Estrada and JV Ejercito.”

“The embassy requests assistance from the [DFA] in serving the notices on these individuals. The embassy also requests confirmation that the Department has been able to do this,” the note said.

A copy of the note was given to the Inquirer by one official source. The Inquirer was allowed to read the legal notices dated Dec. 16, 2005. The sources said the Department of Justice served the notices to the parties three weeks ago.

The sources said that the notices were intended to alert the recipients that they could be implicated in the spying controversy and could be brought to the United States to face charges under an extradition treaty between Manila and Washington.

Aragoncillo, 46, an intelligence analyst of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Michael Ray Aquino, 39, a former police senior superintendent and Lacson aide, were arrested in New Jersey and New York, respectively, last September on espionage charges in connection with the alleged passing of classified information to Filipino opposition leaders.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 25 years.

In all, 150 documents, including 37 classified as “secret,” were allegedly transmitted to

the Filipino leaders from May to August 2005.

### White House’s 1st spy case

Last October, ABC News reported that Aragoncillo had also pilfered documents from the office of Vice President Dick Cheney in what it said was the first case of spying in the White House. Some of the documents were reported to be damaging to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was described as weak and overbearing.

Estrada has admitted getting documents from Aragoncillo, but stressed that these did not seem to be sensitive information. Lacson, Senate Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Rep. Roilo Golez of Parañaque City also acknowledged receiving e-mails from either Aragoncillo or Aquino.

Asked if he got the legal notice, Estrada said, “No, I have not received any. Maybe they brought it to Polk [his house in San Juan] address, but my lawyers should have brought it here if there’s any.”



### WOMEN PROTESTERS

Protesters, mostly women, shout slogans during a rally at the University of the Philippines campus at suburban Quezon city north-east of Manila in continuing protest against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The protesters assailed the Arroyo government allegedly for its repressive decrees foremost of which was her weeklong declaration of a state of emergency allegedly to thwart a coup plot against her.

## ‘RP is Asia’s kidnapping hot spot’

The weak rule of law, rampant corruption in the police ranks and ineffective law enforcement continue to make the Philippines Asia’s kidnapping hot spot, according to a report by a leading risk consultancy group.

The Pacific Strategies and Assessments yesterday released a report saying the Philippine government had failed to address “these factors with any consistency or political will” and as a result kidnapping was likely to flourish in this Southeast Asian nation of 84 million people.

Reacting to the report, the Philippine National Police claimed it had made progress in curbing kidnappings.

“We are doing our best to keep this particular crime within manageable levels. Compared to the past years, we have made some headway,” PNP spokesperson Senior Superintendent Samuel Pagdilao said.

But the Asian-based consultancy group said in its annual report on kidnapping in the Philippines that a total of 44 abductions were reported to police and government agencies last year, a 50-percent increase over 2004.

### Main targets

The PSA also pointed out that the vast majority of kidnapping cases were not reported to the authorities.

The consultancy group said the actual number of kidnappings in the Philippines in 2005 was estimated to be three times the official figure and security analysts reckoned that a kidnapping occurred every three days somewhere in the country.

Chinese-Filipinos, who represent about 3 percent of the total population, remain the main targets of kidnapping syndicates, accounting for 35 percent of all kidnappings in the past three years, the PSA report said. Eleven percent of the kidnap victims were foreign nationals.

“As a close-knit society, Chinese-Filipinos generally make attractive targets because they rarely involve police officials in the negotiation phase and they tend to pay ransom demands quickly,” the report said.

“Chinese-Filipino communities also control approximately 60-70 percent of wealth in the country and are largely perceived as wealthier than their Filipino counterparts.”

### Victims blamed

Pagdilao said the reluctance of victims to cooperate with the PNP was hampering its efforts to solve kidnapping cases.

This is one of the factors that “are contributory to the existence of kidnapping in the Philippines,” he said.

## RP stocks rise on positive economic news

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)**—Philippine stocks rose Thursday following a slew of positive economic news, including increased bank lending.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 13.86 points, or 0.7 percent, to 2,141.77, adding to Wednesday’s 0.3 percent advance.

Providing a strong boost to the index was blue chip Bank of the Philippine Islands, which rose 3.4 percent to 61 pesos following the declaration of a 20 percent stock dividend.

A local newspaper reported Thursday that Congress’ bicameral conference committee has approved extending a law that provides incentives to banks unloading idle assets. Analysts said the measure could help the banking sector further improve asset quality.

Other good news for the banking sector was the latest central bank report Thursday that showed lending by the

country’s 42 commercial banks rose 3 percent on year in January compared to the 0.9 percent on year expansion in December.

Also benefitting from the good banking news was Equitable PCI, up 5.8 percent at 73 pesos. Metropolitan Bank, however, fell 1.4 percent to 36.50 pesos, falling victim to profit-taking, analysts said.

“The good news on the economic front supports our bullish call on banks, because they’re one of the main beneficiaries of an improving economy,” said Citiseconline investment analyst Mark Alan Canizares.

Another positive development was the latest report by the central bank Wednesday saying that overseas workers’ remittances in January were up 17 percent on year.

SM Prime, the country’s largest mall operator, rose 1.3 percent to 8 pesos, while fast-food operator Jollibee was up 5.5 percent at 38.50 pesos.



## PINOYSTYLE

# Lovers' quarrel *or* dead end?

By **DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL**  
INQUIRER

After admitting on national TV that they're hopelessly in love, are Alicia Mayer and Joey Marquez headed for Splitsville? A GMA 7 insider told me that during the taping of "Lagot Ka ... Isusumbong Kita" last Friday, the lovers did

not talk to each other. The "dedmahan" continued to the taping for "Hocus Pocus" on Tuesday. Is it just another lovers' quarrel or have they reached a dead end? It wouldn't surprise me if a third party surfaced as the cause of the breakup. Party over, Pareng Joey?

## Reunited

"Majika," GMA 7's newest telefantasya, unfolds on March 20, reuniting Angel Locsin and Dennis Trillo who were last seen together in the record-breaking TV remake of "Darna."

Angel and Dennis almost fell in love many heartbeats ago but friendship prevailed over love. Their on-screen chemistry creates a mirage of being lovers. What could be more magical than that?

Angel admits that her boyfriend Oyo Boy Sotto suffers intermittent pangs of jealousy. Whenever the trailer of "Majika" is aired, she warns him, "The kissing scene is up next. Close your eyes!"

I asked the two lead stars what magical power they'd like to have.

Angel said: "To be invisible at will—like when I do something embarrassing!"

As for Dennis: "To turn back time so I can correct my mistakes. I'd like to travel back to my high school days. I'm happy now but I can't afford to be carefree anymore, unlike when I was a student."

Eric Quizon, who co-directs with Mac Alejandre, explained how "Majika" is more challenging than "Darna": "Darna is already a brand, part of Pinoy culture. 'Majika' is a new concept that we still need to sell. Second, the work is more tedious since we are dealing with a heavily effects-laden concept (magic). It's like doing 'Harry Potter' on a daily basis. Third, our group is coming from the success of 'Darna' so there is pressure to come up with an even better show. Lastly, as a director I'd like to improve my work and 'Darna' is a tough act to follow. But the challenge makes me want to excel."

(E-mail [wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com](mailto:wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com).)

## ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

# The sparkling Natalie Portman

By **Ruben V. Nepales**  
INQUIRER

**LOS ANGELES**—The movie has a masked man in a black cape. Red roses. A beautiful lady held captive.

"Is this 'Phantom of the Opera, Part Two'?" I teased Natalie Portman.

"We were definitely always laughing, with the roses and the masks and all, but it's such a different movie," Natalie replied, laughing. "V for Vendetta" is different. This film adaptation of Alan Moore's graphic novel (illustrated mostly by David Lloyd), which has parallels to headline stories about terrorism and government oppression going on all over the world today, is getting important media coverage, including an advance review and story in Time magazine.

The action-drama is Natalie's first major solo film. One drab winter afternoon in New York's Mandarin Oriental Hotel, the Jerusalem-born actress was dressed regally for the part. Wearing a striking white dress by Italian designer Giambattista Valli, she cut a striking figure despite her petite size (elfin is a word often used to describe her).

We've seen her on the red carpet but spending an hour with her in a press con, we realized she was even lovelier. The white dress set off her beautiful eyes—clearly her best asset. Her hair is starting to grow back after it was shaved off for a scene in "V for Vendetta."

This Harvard graduate, once voted "sexiest vegetarian" in an online poll by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), is a delight to talk to. James McTeigue, who was Natalie's assistant director in "Star Wars" prequels, and who now directs her in "V," told me, "You only need to be in the room with Natalie for about 30 seconds before you understand how bright she is."

Hugo Weaving, famous as Agent Smith in the "Matrix" movies, saw Natalie in a different perspective. In "V," he is a terrorist freedom fighter who begins a violent guerilla campaign to destroy a totalitar-

ian government. Hugo said to me that with the mask, he really couldn't see Natalie's face, but saw something else. "I was often looking at her breasts," Hugo admitted with a smile.

The "Matrix" connection does not stop with Hugo. Read on for Natalie's insight into the media-elusive Wachowski brothers, who wrote and directed the "Matrix" movies, and who are the writers and co-producers of "V."

**Didn't you dread the scene where your head was shaved? Would you do it again?**

I was actually excited; I thought it would be fun and liberating. I don't know if I'd do it again—but only because it takes a really long time to grow back. The most stressful thing was ... that was a one-shot scene so you want to make sure that the cameras don't mess up, that the razor doesn't mess up, and I don't start laughing."

**What was the biggest adjustment you had to make as a woman with a shaved head?**

It was probably that I became pretty anonymous, like I could walk down the streets in New York and no one stopped me. But when your head is shaved, you get stared at a lot. I also had a cold issue. I remember being in Berlin in that winter with no hair.

**Did you feel an urge to try on Hugo's mask?**

No (laughs). Hugo said it was so hot! [But] even for his off-camera lines, he would keep it on, just to help me react.

**Do you wear metaphorical masks?**

I think I'm a pretty open person. But I have to sort of be careful because you don't want complete strangers knowing intimate details of your life (laughs).

**The Wachowski brothers rarely give interviews. You had the rare privilege of knowing them during the filming. What are they like?**

They're amazing people, re-

ally down to earth. If someone comes up and asks them, no, not if they're the Wachowski Brothers but say, what is this movie about, they'll end up talking to that stranger for half an hour. They're extremely approachable, nice guys who are incredibly smart. They're sort of egoless [but] beyond interesting. They were on the set every day.

**What are your thoughts on "V" creator Alan Moore going public, saying that he does not want to be associated with the movie version?**

Those who made the movie really respect and admire Alan's work. He's had bad experiences in the past so I think it comes from that.

**You just finished making "Goya's Ghost" with director Milos Forman. Can you compare working with an award-winning veteran like Milos and a first-time director like James McTeigue?**

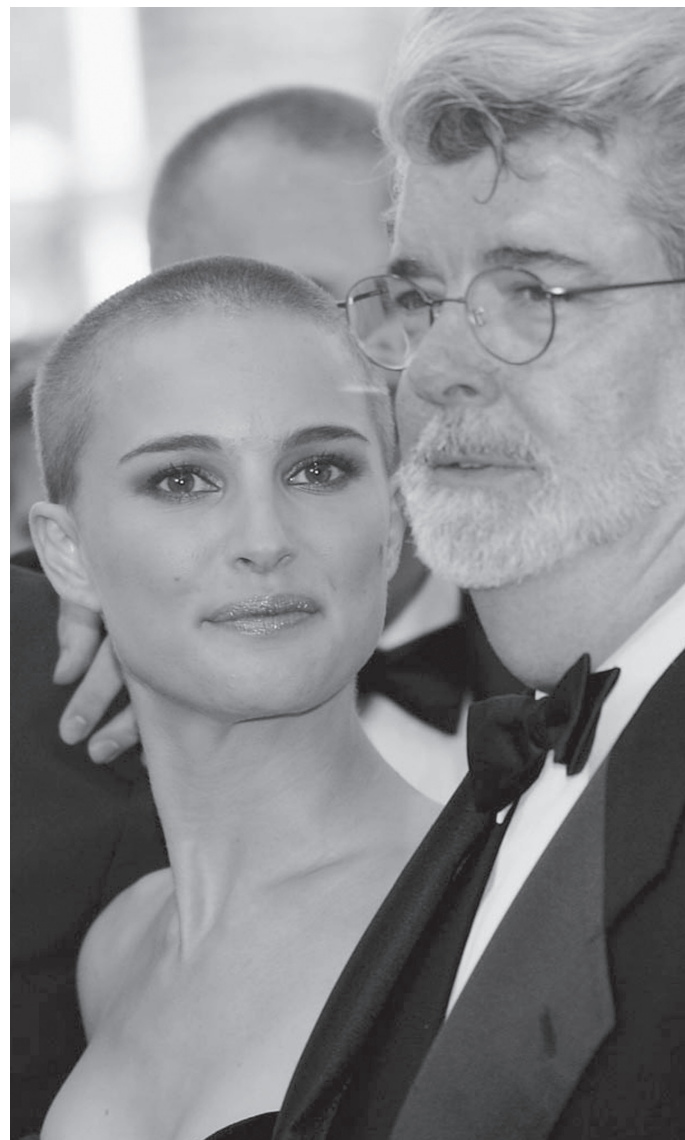
The big difference is that Milos knows exactly what he's going to cut. He never shoots more than what's necessary. James wants to try a lot of different things. That's exciting to me as an actor because he tries a hundred different options. Like he'll say, let's do it serious ... now, kind of funny ... you can do that only with a new director.

**In your discussions with the directors and writers, did you connect the movie to what's going on in the world today?**

There are resonances in the world today. This particular piece was written in 1984 about Thatcher's England but the fact that it can apply to so many different times and places shows the cyclical nature of these occurrences in history.

**Your family in real life is also politically involved.**

My grandfather was a Socialist Zionist, a left wing leader in Poland. So I definitely have this Socialist background, which I appreciate. I was brought up trying to see everyone on equal



Natalie Portman with director George Lucas during the premiere of *Star Wars: The Third Episode* at the Cannes Film Festival.

ground, to be concerned for other people and to desire to make the world a better place.

**You recently traveled to Morocco. What inspired that trip?**

I have been to Morocco twice now. I went once alone when I was in college. There's this book called *The Future Of Life* that's all about the environment and about how because human beings originated in Africa and Asia, the Middle East is the center of those two continents, that it's the environment that humans are most evolutionarily adapted to and feel most comfortable in. Whenever I'm in the desert atmosphere, I feel like I am in equilibrium with the environment. When I finished "V," I went for a few days as a birthday present for myself. There was this storm, so unusual in the desert. I ended up in a tent with six strangers, watching this amazing lightning. To actually have this silence in the desert

was very helpful to me.

**Going to "Goya's Ghost," how was your experience filming in Spain?**

I loved the crew and I loved experiencing a different culture. I felt socially inept because ... they were working hard and then partying all night, then going back to work. Everyone was like, aren't you in your early 20s?

**How have you stayed away from the public eye, unlike some of your peers?**

I do have a lot of fun and I do go out ... with my friends who are not famous people. They're amazing people and are newsworthy in their respective fields but they are not tabloid fodder.

**You are socially aware and yet you are always among the best dressed on the red carpet. Are there no conflicts between these two lifestyles?**

When you're lucky in life, I don't think you should feel guilty and not take advantage of it. [I] enjoy the fun and beauty of clothes as art or whatever but don't get wrapped up in it. All my shoes are from Target (laughs). I like Stella McCartney because she does non-leather stuff.

**How did you become a vegetarian?**

It was a whole series of circumstances—your reasons change over time. I like being a vegetarian. When I was nine, I went to a Jewish school. We weren't kosher at home. My mom used to make chicken salad sandwiches. I would have to lie to everyone that it's tuna. I hated lying so much, that my mom had to make me kosher lunches. Now, it has become a really central thing in my life. Many religions associate food with belief because you eat three times a day. For me, the most important thing is preserving and respecting life in all its forms. So three times a day, I think about that.

**You had no less than Luc Besson as director for your first film, "The Professional." You were only in your pre-teens. How do you remember that experience?**

It was amazing. Mainly, I remember them keeping it fun and very childlike for me, always making it like a game and treating me like the little princess of the set. It was so nice and to have an experience like that, to have Luc Besson as your first director and Jean Reno and Gary Oldman as your first co-actors. It raises your standards.

**What is your next film? And what do you do for fun?**

I am starting a children's film in about a month called "Mr. Magorian's Wonder Emporium," with Dustin Hoffman, which I'm very excited about. I like a good laugh more than anything else. I'm figuring out what to do after that. As for my free time, I wish I had a little more (laughs). I love spending time with my friends. When I can't because I'm away, I read a lot and watch a lot of movies.

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# Wake up and smell the flowers

By Apples Aberin Sadhwani  
INQUIRER

Off with the bolero and cardigan, kiss goodbye to woolen slacks and heavy jeans. Give a big welcome to cool, crisp whites and breezy linens. The sun is searing hot nowadays so fashionistas are starting to peel off layers of clothing.

As a result, fragrance choices are also getting lighter and fresher. If clothing styles change every season to adapt to the weather, it makes sense for fragrances to evolve as well.

So, say adieu to heady, spicy scents that give the feeling of warmth and are, therefore, more suited for cooler climates. It's time to open your arms (and your purse strings) to lighter, fruity and floral fragrances that evoke images of halcyon days in an exotic tropical island.

As early as winter in other parts of the world, fragrance companies had started introducing scents that are best suited for tropical climates. Some even went as far as introducing new perfume lines especially concocted for "cruise season," that period that falls smack in the middle of winter, when almost everyone runs off to some exotic travel destination.

What makes these scents so special anyway? For one thing, they are made much lighter than the usual cloying, heavy perfumes. They are not only paler in color, often times appearing as clean and clear as refreshing water, they are also subtler in scent, usually containing a combination of floral or fruity elements. What's more, they are packaged in pretty bottles that look great on any dressing table.

Choice of scent is undoubtedly a very subjective matter but this season,



**The sun is searing hot nowadays so fashionistas are starting to peel off layers of clothing. As a result, fragrance choices are also getting lighter and fresher. If clothing styles change every season to adapt to the weather, it makes sense for fragrances to evolve as well.**

it really is time to lighten up. Try out some of these sensational scents and find the fragrance that's right for you.

## The nose knows

Here are some helpful facts that you should know when choosing fragrance.

Try on just one product at a time so you can avoid olfactory overload. Dab or spray it on your pulse points (the inner wrist is best) and let it rest for a while, as the scent will still change according to your body chemistry.

Perfumes are composed of three notes, namely, top, middle and bottom notes. The top notes evaporate the fastest (about 5-10 minutes) and is the first scent you whiff as you apply the perfume. Middle notes emerge about 15 minutes after application and can last up to an hour or more, while bottom notes are the heavier ingredients and last for several hours. Basically, all three notes, though distinct, blend together to create a unique scent.

The difference between perfume, Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette and Eau de Cologne lies in the concentration of oils in the fragrance. The highest concentration is in perfume, followed by Eau de

Parfum, Eau de Toilette and Cologne. Perfumes are stronger and last longer while Eau de Parfums and Eau de Toilettes or colognes are lighter. You might want to reserve the use of perfume for evening affairs while using the lighter versions for work or casual events.

Spritz or dab perfume on your pulse points like the inner wrist, behind your ears, on your neck and even behind your knees. To make it last longer, try layering your fragrance. Fragrance companies offer products, like bath gels or lotions, which you can use to accentuate your scent. A light spray on the hair can also last all day. For a subtler scent, spray the perfume directly above and in front of you and simply walk into the mist as it showers down.

Be careful not to get perfume stains on clothing and beware of perfume overload, as this is a definite no-no that is akin to a fashion victim piling on all the trends. Your perfume should complement, not overpower, your style and personality.

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At the end of the day, Ino Caluza said, finding the right pair of jeans has nothing to do with its brand, price and, yes, embellishments. It has everything to do with fit.

# Splash dance

By ALEX Y. VERGARA  
INQUIRER, INQ7.NET

Two years after coming up with his first pair of made-to-order jeans, Victorino "Ino" Caluza still feels a bit queasy whenever people describe his creations as "couture."

Apart from its trademark leather trimmings on the back pockets, V-shaped belt loops and occasional hint of Swarovski beads, Caluza's jeans line under his very own Viktor label is bereft of major embellishments. Of course, something as de rigueur as top-stitching doesn't count.

"People always associate couture with decorations," he says. "I'm more concerned with the fit. But if you consider made-to-order stuff couture, then my jeans probably are."

The former art director of an in-flight magazine may balk at putting too much trimmings on his jeans, but he's proud of the fact that not a few of his clients went home happy after slipping into the perfect-fitting pair.

Caluza's love affair with jeans and his search for the ideal but affordable pair led him to design his own. He even designed a suit made entirely of denim when doing so was unheard of in the Philippines.

"Friends started noticing what I was wearing and, before I knew it, I was already taking their orders," he says. "To cater to a growing clientele, I will be opening my first mall outlet on April 1 at the fourth level of the Podium."

At the end of the day, he adds, finding the right pair of jeans has nothing to do with its brand, price and, yes, embellishments. It has everything to do with fit. This explains why a growing number of cli-

ents are willing to brave the traffic and spend precious time fitting.

"It doesn't matter if a pair costs a mere P250," adds Caluza. "If the fit is perfect, chances are you're going to wear it more often than the more expensive but ill-fitting imported pair."

## Figure flaws

In fact, Caluza seems to have learned by heart the typical Filipino's figure flaws. Not a few young women, for instance, have big hips and small waistlines. Most guys, on the other hand, have short legs, flat behinds and ample waistlines.

He advises women with big hips to invest in a good pair or two of flattering boot-cut jeans. But the short guy is better off sticking to straight legs, as the boot-cut silhouette can only make him look smaller.

"Men with less-than-ample behinds should look for the right low-rise jeans," Caluza adds.

Addressing a person's specific figure is just half of it. Before Caluza sits down and takes a client's measurements, he first conducts a so-called lifestyle assessment.

"I usually recommend a style of jeans based primarily on what a client does," he says. "It also helps to know if he or she is a day or night person. If the client loves to party, then he or she would need a more unique or striking pair."

Caluza may have limited his offerings to three design series—V (P3,700-P4,000 per pair), VP (P4,900) and the premium VX (P5,000-P5,500)—but each presents numerous "permutations" that are limited only by the user's imagination and chutzpah.

For starters, the designer has a wide range of materials in various colors, washes, weights and grades at his disposal. After his first year in the business, he added cotton twill, canvas and even camouflage—as in military-inspired jigsaw print—to his extensive inventory of denim fabrics.

"Rambo" meets "Brokeback Mountain?" Couture jeans has never looked this radical.



PINOY KASI

Why Filipino

By MICHAEL L. TAN  
INQUIRER

I'm here in Cebu where, earlier this morning, I met Gov. Bel-laflor Angara-Castillo of Aurora province, who mentioned that they needed to produce health education materials in different local languages. I was surprised and asked, "But isn't Aurora a Tagalog province?" The governor had to explain that the province now has numerous migrants, mainly Ilocano, but now also including people from as far as the Visayas.

That conversation highlighted just one of the many problems that come from our lack of a national language. Even worse, we seem to be moving backwards, what with the recent Department of Education findings that high school seniors' proficiency in Filipino drastically dropped over the last few years.

Last Wednesday, I looked into our long history of neglecting the development of a national language. We seem to associate Filipino and our other languages with poverty and backwardness. Accompanying this linguistic inferiority complex is an over-valuation of English, which we think provides the key to national development, mainly to export more Filipino workers.

I'd question that assumption, and argue that our neglect of Filipino and our unrealistic expectations of English decrease our competitiveness in the global market.

Nationalism

Our more economically developed neighbors rightly recognize the need to balance nationalism with globalism, and this is reflected in their language policies. In the post-colonial period after World War II, many developing countries pushed hard to craft a national language.

Some countries, like Thailand, were more fortunate because they already had a common language spoken by most of its citizens. Others, like Indonesia and the Philippines, had a more daunting task because of great linguistic diversity. Indonesia was, however, able to develop Bahasa Indonesia while we lagged behind in our development of Filipino.

Some of the reasons for a national language were quite practical: you needed a common language for education, public health, agriculture, industry.

But the most important reason for developing a national language was that of developing a national identity that transcended

class, caste, ethnicity, religion. It was important to have a common language to tell the story of a nation, and pass this from one generation to another. And, with time, our neighbors began as well to develop fine literature, written in the national language, capturing the dynamism, the exuberance, as well as the anguish and angst, of national life.

Globalism

A nationalistic policy toward language did not mean xenophobia. Japanese, for example, is peppered with borrowed English words, from home furnishings to high-tech jargon. The Chinese, on the other hand, drew on existing words to describe the wonders of the new technologies: the train is a "fire horse," a computer an "electric brain."

Gradually, our neighbors began to use their national language to open the world to their citizens. Visit bookstores in China, Indonesia or Thailand, and you'll find hundreds of books-the world's finest literature, as well as computer manuals, self-improvement books, textbooks in the social and natural sciences-translated into the local national language.

These countries have come to accept the importance of English and other languages of the world and encourage citizens to learn these languages, through their national language. In a Thai bookstore, you'll find Thai-English, Thai-Japanese, Thai-Chinese, Thai-French dictionaries, to name a few, both in book and electronic forms, the latter with speech synthesizers so you hear the proper pronunciation of foreign words.

Again, the reasons for doing this are very utilitarian: you learn a foreign language not because it's required but because it serves a purpose, often related to national development. So when the Chinese learn English, it's to be able to read the original technical books, or to communicate with visiting technicians. Their goal is to plug into the world to reap its benefits for the home country.

No wonder the West is running scared-the Japanese did it, the Chinese are doing it now, using just enough English (or German, or French) to learn new skills and technologies, which they then copy, often with great improvements.

Talking back

What's happening in the Philippines? We've neglected Filipino and our other languages. Only recently did we recognize that maybe the

way to go in schools is to have the local language (e.g., Cebuano) used in the first years of primary school to teach Filipino and other basic subjects, including, for older kids, English.

And even as we laughed at our neighbors for their resistance to English, our own proficiency in that language has stagnated. I often suspect we're not actually seeing a deterioration of English in the Philippines. What's happened is that for most Filipinos, the level of English has remained pretty much the same from the colonial period, just enough to understand the instructions of the boss. Which is why we had such a perfect fit for a particular segment of the overseas labor market.

Now that new opportunities are emerging, such as in the call centers, we're realizing we don't have enough Filipinos who can speak English in a more interactive way, offering information and advice. And when it comes to the most lucrative high-paying jobs and consultancies, we have only a handful of Filipinos who have the ability to analyze problems in English, and to propose and explain solutions.

To capture that market, it won't be enough to just learn English. Filipinos have to be able to use the language spoken at home and bring this to tackle the complexities of the outside world. But since we neglected both Filipino and English in our schools, we have many young Filipinos who just can't communicate.

I despair over the way students in the University of the Philippines grope for words: "Kasi, sir, you know, the ano of the ano is, well, you know it's all very complex." Alas, at the rate we're going, we won't need English or Tagalog. We'll need to teach mind reading in schools.

Proficient neither in Filipino nor English, our worlds will remain limited. We will continue to export Filipinos, but mainly in low-pay service occupations. At home, we suffer too from not being able to develop science and technology, so we end up buying other countries' consumer products.

As we search for solutions to our national aphasia, we might heed the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, who once said Indians have to learn Hindi to speak with each other, and English to speak to the world. I would say we should go for as many languages as possible so we can discover the world, but meantime, let's develop our own languages, too, and our sense of identity, so we can indeed speak with the world, and not just be spoken to. It all boils down to a simple matter of respecting ourselves, so that when the world talks to us, we can talk back.

Table manners

As I mentioned in my last column, I have yet to verify if there is an extant copy of *Lagda* available in nearby libraries, and I am hoping it is not another hoax like the Code of Kalantiaw. Gregorio Zaide listed down a number of years when the book saw print and the only reference I found was this: "*Lagda sa pagca maligdon sa tauong Bisaya, sa nagacalain lain nga mga cahintang ug pagcabutang sa iang quinabuhi. Hinusay sa usa ca Pareng Agustino Calzado sa provincia sa Sugbu. Guilaqip-an sa mga pagtolonan sa pagcompisal ug pagcomulga, ingon man sa mga pagpahimatngon ni Sta.Teresa de Jesus. Segunda edicion. Binondo 1865. Imprenta de M. Sanchez y Cia. Anloague 6.*"

The book is in Visayan, but the author is not the Jesuit Pedro de Estrada, but an Augustinian who was so modest he didn't even sign his name. When you go on a bibliographical search, you discover that you find more questions than answers. Check out Volume 5 of Zaide's 12-volume "Documentary Sources of Philippine History." Those who want to compare *Lagda* with the more famous Tagalog book of manners *Urbana at Felisa* will have to visit the National Library, the Lopez Museum or a

university library because this once-popular book is currently out of print. From the epistolary form of the book, we note that Urbana lives in the city and she writes letters to Felisa who lives in the country giving advice on good manners particularly for a boy named Modesto. One of my favorite parts of *Urbana and Felisa* concerns conduct during meals, thus I looked up the separate section on meals in *Lagda* and was not disappointed. While many of these rules are still practiced today and many are common sense norms, it is funny when spelled out in black and white like:

"If something is to be served which needs to be peeled, peel it before the meal begins.

"Wash your hands well before you go to the table because it is unpleasant and loathsome to see dirty hands handling food.

"Do not leave on the table or give to others what you have already touched.

"Do not gargle when others are still eating.

"Do not stick out your tongue to take food into your mouth.

"Do not keep your mouth full like a hungry wave, or swallow the food like a *sawa* [python]. Do not feed yourself too fast like a monkey that knows it is to be trapped or driven away."

What I find fascinating here is the

change from our "kamay-an" [eating with the fingers] culture to that which requires a table, spoon, fork, knife and napkin. We are not even talking here of the elaborate Victorian times when various implements were made to be used for specific foods and purposes: fish knives, tongs to hold escargot, strawberry spoon with strainer, watermelon spoons, long drink spoons for stirring liquid in a glass that also doubles as a straw. For many Filipinos then as now, the "basic" things require more than a banana leaf on a low table and your hands:

"It is a proper thing for the well-educated man to prepare clean cloth for wiping the hands because it is shameful to remove dirt from one's hands on his dress.

"The plates to be used should have been washed well, both inside and outside so that they may not repel those who will see and hold them and expose their owner to embarrassment and shame.

"Do not stir the food with your fingers but cut it out with the knife or with the spoon.

"Do not bite into any bone as if you



**Looking Back**  
By AMBETH OCAMPO  
INQUIRER

were a dog and do not suck at it because this is a sign of greed.

"Do not use your bare hands for transferring food from one place to another, but use the fork or spoon, or else jerk it off from your plate to the other one.

"Do not gather the food with both hands but take it bit by bit with your left hand.

"Do not lick the fingers with your lips, do not smell the food before putting it in your mouth and do not blow it to cool it off."

The last needs some comment because Kentucky Fried Chicken encourages us to do otherwise since the colonel's chicken is "finger-lickin' good." Then look around you at table and you will notice people blowing into their soup to cool it before ingesting.

There are social norms that are more complicated:

"Do not be asking for food like a hungry dog barking for its food and shouting so that you should be served. If you are told to eat with

your parents at a table, eat standing, but if you are asked to sit down, choose the lowest seat.

"Do not eat ahead of the others, and not be the last one to finish.

"If you are eating with other people, serve them first.

"Do not look around to see how people are eating or what food is being served to them.

"If many kinds of food are served, it is a sign of courtesy to take a little of everything, but do not eat them too hurriedly because it is a sign of greediness to finish them right away.

"Do not empty your plate completely but leave a little on it so that it will not look as if a hermit crab has been eating from it."

I don't know how a hermit crab eats, but we often see people leaving one morsel on the plate, the so-called 'pedazo de verguenza' [literally, piece of shame], because to consume everything was a sign of greed. Times have changed because parents today order their children to finish everything on their plates.

Why do the rules change? That is a question better posed to an anthropologist than a historian.

Comments are welcome at [aocampo@ateneo.edu](mailto:aocampo@ateneo.edu).



# SAMU'T SARI



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteers in the Budweiser-Coca Cola 6th annual UFO Inter-organizational Basketball League pose for a souvenir shot with Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo at the Ada Gymnasium in Susupe.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## SHOOTOUT WINNER

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, third from right, presents the trophy to three-point shootout winner LIPS-Mobil forward James Abuy, second from left, at the Ada Gymnasium in Susupe. Others in picture are, from left, UFO president Roland Pamintuan, LIPS founder Ramon Awit, and Visminda president Nelida Atalg.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## THIRD PLACE

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo presents the trophy to LIPS-Mobil coach Marvin Deocares for the team's third place win in the Budweiser-Coca Cola 6th annual UFO Inter-organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gymnasium in Susupe.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## FOURTH PLACE

Visminda president Nelida Atalg receives the trophy from Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo on behalf of the Visminda-Tambayan team, which won fourth place in the Budweiser-Coca Cola 6th annual UFO Inter-organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gymnasium in Susupe.



MARK RABAGO

## DANCE NUMBER

Halftime of Game 2 between Cabalen-RP Construction/Transamerica and SIP-Flor A. Miranda was spiced up by a dance number performed by Bayani Association.



MARK RABAGO

## BIG BROTHER

Bayani Association members dance to the tune of Pinoy Big Brother, a smash hit program broadcasted by ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel.